



Grass-roots group gets prevention award (July 20, 2007)

The Chewelah-area group, Prescriptions for Life, recently received the “Random Acts of Prevention” award from the Greater Spokane Substance Abuse Council in recognition of the group’s efforts at preventing prescription pain medication abuse.

“We were so impressed with how the Prescriptions for Life group rallied around a family and at the same time saw the bigger issue in the community,” said Lisa Demke, Drug-Free Communities Coordinator for the Greater Spokane Substance Abuse Council (GSSAC) Prevention Center. “They took the grass-roots approach and just went for it.”

“We are pleased to be recognized by GSSAC for our efforts thus far,” remarked Jerry Pugh, Gess Elementary Principal (Chewelah) and Prescriptions for Life Interim Director. “There is a lot of work that needs to be done and funds to be raised to help families avoid or overcome addiction to prescription pain medication.”

Prescriptions for Life formed in early 2006 under the umbrella of the Southern Stevens County Health Care Association, a 501(c)3 nonprofit established in 1975. The group is working to provide prescription pain medication monitoring and treatment options while seeking to eliminate pain medication abuse in the Chewelah region.

“I am glad that our hard work has been recognized with the Random Acts of Prevention award,” noted Dr. Mark Selle, Valley School District Superintendent and Prescriptions for Life Secretary. “This recognition will help our ongoing efforts to prevent deaths due to the abuse of prescription pain medication. Part of our mission is to partner with other organizations and we hope the recognition will help promote these partnerships.”

Demke of GSSAC pointed out that “the more partnerships that we have when working on substance abuse prevention, the more we can try to keep things in check. Different groups have specific areas of focus, and together we can tackle the issue in a much more comprehensive manner.”

Demke said that the Random Acts of Prevention award concept all started with GSSAC Executive Director, Linda Thompson, when she was driving in Spokane and she saw an insurance company reader board that advised drivers to protect children and to not drive under the influence. Thompson thought, “That’s doing prevention!” and from there got the idea of sending the insurance company a letter recognizing their random act of prevention.

“Now we have started doing the Random Acts award as a regular thing,” Demke said. “It is to promote and let businesses and individuals know that their efforts are being noticed and to show that prevention happens in many different ways.”

GSSAC also gets the word out by listing the Random Acts of Prevention award winners in their monthly newsletter, which is partially funded through The Drug-Free Communities Support Program, a federally funded grant through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Prescriptions for Life drew GSSAC's attention earlier this year when the group was featured in the *Spokesman-Review* in February and soon after when a representative from the group came to GSSAC's "Prescription Town Hall: How and Why are Prescription Drugs Harming Our Kids?" meeting.

"We were very impressed with the group and how they have gotten a lot of people involved," Demke said. "The Prescriptions for Life group should be proud. Prescription drug issues cross county lines and this is a way that we can educate in positive way by having groups like ours work together."

Prescriptions for Life Interim Director Pugh stated, "We are thrilled for the opportunity to team up with other agencies to increase awareness about prescription drug abuse. We offer our thanks to those who are involved and extend an invitation to all to get involved."

For more information about Prescriptions for Life, visit www.Rx4LifeChewelah.org or call (509) 935-4529. For more information about the Greater Spokane Substance Abuse Council, visit www.gssacpreventioncenter.com or call (509) 922-8383.